

MERCATOR:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved;

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Thursday, October 1. to Saturday, October 3. 1713.

Further Mistakes of the Guardian's spoken to.

The Silk Manufacture wrong Estimated by the Guardian.

The French Silks not admitted by the Treaty of Commerce upon EASIE TERMS.

The Quantity of Silks Imported, not probable to be for the future, what it was before, and never was before what the Guardian represents, (viz.) 500,000 a Year.

AS the two last Papers have spoken to some of the Mistakes, which the *Guardian* has fallen into in the Scheme he has been pleased to give of the French Trade, *Guardian*, No. 170. the *MERCATOR* asks his leave to speak now to other Mistakes committed in the same Paper.

But because the *MERCATOR* would be just to every part of the Argument, and avoid any Mistake of his own, as well as mention the Mistakes of another, he desires to look back to the last *MERCATOR*, where Notice is taken of the Quantity of Linen Imported from France under the Title of BRITISH LINEN, great part of which he finds since may be Lie en of *Britany* in France, improperly called British; tho' some also of Scotland, the Scots having often sent Linen to France, has been brought with it: But being as careful as possible not to lay more weight upon any Argument than it will bear, the *MERCATOR* takes this Notice in abatement of what may have been infer'd from that part, believing his Argument against the probability of what the *Guardian* had said of the Quantity of Linen Imported yearly from France, to be very good without it.

Having given this Caution, the *MERCATOR* proceeds to the next Head, which the *Guardian* has spoken of, (viz.) The Silk Manufacture; in which the *Guardian* (1.) "Affirms that Spittlefields alone Manufactures "to the Value of Two Millions a Year. (2.) He suggests that the French wrought Silks are on our new "prospects of Trade to be Imported upon EASIE "TERMS. (3.) That if it should be so, in all probability half the Looms in Spittlefields would be laid "down. And, (4.) That the Loss to the Nation "thereby would be 500,000 Pound a Year.

The *MERCATOR* shall endeavour calmly to expostulate with this Author upon these Heads, and to shew him how improbable these Things are to be true.

And, First, The *Guardian* is right in saying, that since the late French Wars the Silk Manufacture is increased to a mighty Digrce: But the *MERCATOR* hopes the *Guardian* would not be understood to mean, that by the stop of the French Trade, occasioned by those Wars, our Silk Manufactures are so much increased as he mentions; for that would be impossible, because the Sum of Two Millions, which he says is now Yearly Manufactured in Spittlefields only, or any Sum near it,

really never was Imported from France in a Year in Silk Manufactures, and therefore it had been much more pointing as to the Cause of that Encrease, if it been said Since the late French Wars, and since the Prohibiting the East-India wrought Silks; for doubtless this last was much more the Cause of the Encrease of the Silk Manufacture in Spittlefields than the Wars with France.

For Proof of this, the *MERCATOR* refers to the Representation of the Silk Weavers, when they Addressed themselves to the Parliament for the Prohibition of East-India Silks, and afterwards when they were apprehensive of that Prohibition's being taken off again, wherein they express themselves as reduced to the last Extremity, because of the Influx of East-India Silks in such Quantities as caused the Broad-Looms to be laid aside; and particularly gave Account of the Looms in Canterbury for an Example, which they said in Print, and which is now to be seen, were reduced to a very few, (viz.) under Fifty, from above a Thousand; and the Spittlefields Weavers were represented as in a very deplorable Condition: The Streets in Spittlefields became Desolate, the Houses would yield no Rent, whole Streets of Houses which were begun to be Built, fell to the Ground Landlord, and might have been had of the Ground Landlords for nothing but Finishing; the Master-Weavers broke, and the poor Journey-Men scattered themselves all over the Nation, some to the Army, some to other Employments, many to Begging; and some to worse; this is to be seen Printed by the Weavers, and much more than this. And yet the French Silks were all this while excluded by the high Duties and Prohibitions of Commerce, as well as now; so that it was the Stop put to the Importation of East-India Silks, which gave the great rise to the Silk-Manufacture, not the French War.

This is mentioned to let us see, that as the French War, or the stop of the French Trade, was not the Cause of so great an Encrease of the Silk Manufacture, so the restoring that Trade cannot be so much a Loss to the Nation, tho' the EASIE TERMS the *Guardian* mentions were to take place.

In the next place, The *MERCATOR* desires the *Guardian* to consider, that Two Millions a Year in Silk Manufactures in Spittlefields only, is an immense Sum; the *MERCATOR* hopes the *Guardian* has very good Evidence of it; and therefore it being also not



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to the Case in Hand, but rather against him, the *MERCATOR* does not Dispute it here, only puts the *Guardian* in mind, that great Quantities of wrought Silks are made in other parts of England besides London, and in other parts of London besides Spittlefields.

But, as is said above, this is against him, for by how much the more the Manufacture of Silk is reckoned to amount to, by so much the less is it probable, that the French Silks should cause half of it to cease, tho' they were to come in upon EASY TERMS.

There seems a Difficulty in the *Guardian's* Arithmetick also, which altho' the *MERCATOR* cannot reconcile, no doubt the *Guardian* can, (viz.) The *Guardian* says, that Two Millions per Annum is Manufactured in Silks in Spittlefields only: and if the French Silks come in upon EASY TERMS, it is probable half the Looms in Spittlefields will be laid aside; and this will cause us to take French Silks to the Value of 500,000 Pounds a Year: Now if the French supply us with Silks to stop half those Looms, which Manufactured before Two Millions a Year, the *MERCATOR* thinks the French must Import a Million, or else there is so much quite lost, and neither made at home, or Imported from abroad, which has some Inconsistency in it.

Let us then examine the Imports of Wrought Silks, which have been formerly, and the Import, which it is probable there will be after the Treaty of Commerce shall take place, and let them be stated with this Scheme of the *Guardian's*, and the Probabilities of the last will appear the plainer.

For former Accounts, we cannot take better Evidence than the Enemies of the Treaty. The OLD SCHEME was the first that mentioned the Quantity of French Silks Imported in a Year, which he over-did very much; but take him as he has actually placed it, he makes it to amount to 300,000 l. a Year for the Year 1674.

A new Scheme-maker has since given an Account of another Year, (viz.) 1685, and finding his Quantity fall short, he has added to the Price because he would not want the Sum; and he makes it up by that shift.

The real Value of the Silks is very difficult to know; some rate them at 40 s. per pound weight, some at 50: The Value at the Custom-house was in those Times for Regulating the Duties settled at 28 s. per l. but at the highest Rate, it never came up to the *Guardian's* Account of 500,000 by above 160,000 l. a Year.

It remains then for the *Guardian* to make it a little more plain, (1) How he will have the French Silks, if Imported upon EASY TERMS, amount to 500,000 per An. and (2) If they should, How that Sum Imported shall cause half the Looms in Spittlefields to be laid aside, seeing they now Manufacture two Millions Value in a Year, as he had said before.

From this Difficulty, it seems needful to enquire, what is to be understood by the *Guardian's* Expression EASY TERMS, if the French Silks are admitted upon EASY TERMS; and this being well explained, will at once both clear the *Guardian* from all Mistake or Objection against him, and clear the Treaty of Commerce at the same time: For if by the Treaty of Commerce, when made Effectual, the French Silks are not to be admitted upon EASY TERMS, then the Treaty of Commerce has done no harm, nor the *Guardian* either: The Looms in Spittlefields will not have a Million of their Work stopt by half a Million of Importation, nor will more be Imported now, than ever was heard of before.

To state the EASY TERMS, which the French Silks are to be admitted on, we must see, what they were formerly charged at, and what they are to be charged at now.

The former Duties, every one knows, before the French Wars aforesaid, were 3 s. per pound weight of all Wrought Silks except Alamodes and Lustings; and those paid 5 s. 6 d. to 6 s. per Pound weight. These were EASY TERMS, and yet then, by our Scheme-

makers, in their most extravagant Accounts, the Importations amounted to not more than 300,000 l. per Ann. but by due Accounts to much less.

When the present Duties are reduced by the Treaty of Commerce, the Wrought Silks, as above, are to pay 12 s. and 3 d. per Pound instead of 2 s. 9 d. or 3 s. and the Alamodes and Lustings 1 l. 14 s. per Pound, or, in true English, Effectually excluded from ever coming in at all.

It is now left to the *Guardian*, to say, whether these are EASY TERMS, whether 500,000 a Year in French Wrought Silks can possibly be Imported upon these Terms, or whether there is any danger of stopping a Million a Year of our Spittlefields Work by the Importation of French Silks upon these Duties and Terms of Admittance.

The *MERCATOR* is very loth to offer the *Guardian* any thing, which should look like the Indecency, with which the scurrilous Party-Writers treat this Paper, and which he complains of; but would entreat him to consider, if this Case stands thus, if these suggested Sums are not reasonable to be suggested, these Probabilities not probable, and these Fears not well grounded; then what End do these things serve to, but Enflaming the good People of this Nation, arming them against themselves, and stirring them up against the best Measures taken to enrich and preserve them?

And what is all this Dispute for, but to form Interests for and against Persons and Parties, to the Destruction of the publick Peace; Things, it is hoped, the *Guardian* will not own he really intends, and it is not doubted, when he is better inform'd, will avoid?

It is most certain, that the Importation of French Wrought Silks cannot be considerable on the Terms of the present Treaty of Commerce: The whole Trade of Alamodes and Lustings is stopt; the Weavers gave it up before the House of Commons, and acknowledg'd, that Part was sufficient; and indeed it is certain, that except Clandestine Trade, not a Piece can be brought in; it cannot be rational to imagine, that if our Weavers can make any Work at all of that kind, that the French can Import them and match our Workmen, whereas they pay first a Duty of 5 per Cent. upon Exportation out of France, and then 34 s. per Pound weight on their Importation here, which is near 80 per Cent. upon their first Cost. The *MERCATOR* has much to add in this Case to Confirm this, but refers it to the farther Discourse of our General Importations, which will be spoken of by it self.

There is much to be said to some other Mistakes of the *Guardian* in the same Paper, as particularly in the Article of the Brandy, the Working cheaper in France than in England, the Buying Silk cheaper, and the like: But we cannot enlarge on these things here.

THE Error of the Press *MERCATOR* No. 42. was ONCE Corrected, *MERCATOR* No. 43. Therefore he that said it was not ONCE Corrected, did not True.

The *MERCATOR* thinks directing the Reader to Read a Thing Right, when it was Printed Wrong, is a sufficient Correction.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Poll of the Livery-Men of the City of London, at the Election for Members of Parliament: Begun Monday, October the 9th, 1710. and ended the Saturday following. Shewing who each Person Poll'd for. The Names of those that did not Poll. And the Objections made at the Scrutiny. Compar'd with the Clerks Lists of the several Companies deliver'd on Oath to the Right Honourable Sir Samuel Garrard, Bart. Lord-Mayor. The Whole being a Compleat List of the Livery. Printed for John Morphew, near Stationers-Hall. Price 1 s.

